**Project 2: Rhetorical Genre Analysis**

What’s your favorite genre… of movie or video game? Me, I hate horror. It scares me. I also hate research essays – that’s a genre, too. I know; you’re groaning. That’s because you know what goes into a research essay, the *conventions*. And you know the *context* you have to write those things for, too, and who you’re writing it to. That means a genre – a category – can seem like a pretty rigid thing, but the truth is, they change over time and across cultures. For this Project, we’ll learn more about *the rhetorical situation* and about how to analyze all kinds of genres in a variety of ways.

**Readings:**

* Laura Bolin Carroll, “Backpacks vs Briefcases”
* Kerry Dirk, “Navigating Genres”
* Visual Analysis materials

**Writing Assignment:**

Your Writing Assignment will be in two parts: a group-created Annotated Bibliography of all the examples your find of your genre, and 2) an Individual Report where you each get to analyze what you now know about that genre. The Guidelines for both the Annotated Bibliography and the Individual Report are after the Schedule and Due Dates.

**Schedule and Due Dates:**

***Mon 9/25 Where Rhetorical Situation and Genre Collide.*** We’ll do an in-class activity that shows just how much we already know about genre even before we look at it closely. Homework: follow-up post due 10/2.

***Wed 10/2 Doing the Rhetorical Analysis.*** Using SOAPSTone to Rhetorical Analysis. Visual analysis. Homework: Read Kerry Dirk and do the response activity, due 10/7.

***Mon 10/07 The Unfamiliar Genre Project.*** Next, you’ll choose groups and be assigned an unfamiliar

genre. You’ll start gathering examples of your genre, and build a group Annotated Bibliography that you’ll all use to write your Individual Reports. The Annotated Bibliography is due Mon 10/28.

***Wed 10/9 thru Mon 10/28 From Group to Individual.*** Now that you’ve helped each other do the research and initial analysis, each person will go off on their own and write their Individual Report. Homework: Rough Draft of Individual Report due Wed 11/04.

***Mon 11/04 Workshop Individual Report***. Write a Reviewer’s Memo and workshop your drafts. Homework: Revised Draft and Revision Memo due Mon 11/11.

**Guidelines for Rhetorical Genre Analysis Project**

1. **Collecting samples.**
   1. Each person in the group brings in at least 3 examples of the genre.
   2. Choose examples that cross time and cross cultures. If we use the Menus as an example, you might pick one from the early 20th century and today, a couple from different ethnic foods (Chinese, Italian, Southern Comfort…), and some high-priced restaurants as well as cheap eats.
2. **Group Annotated Bibliography.** For each example entry:
   1. Start with bibliographic information: title, author, where you got it, date you got it, etc. You can use either MLA or APA (check <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html> -- they have a plug-in for creating a citation).
   2. In a sentence or two, explain what it is. If you have a picture of it, insert it at the end of the entry.
   3. In a short paragraph, explain the Rhetorical Situation of this example.
      * Author/Speaker: Can you tell who the author is? If not, what can we figure out about them? Does the author need any special characteristics to be able to create in this genre?
      * Occasion/Setting: Where does this piece appear? When did it occur? What medium/context does it appear in?
      * Audience: Who reads these texts? Who is the author trying to talk to? How do you know? What characteristics do they share?
      * Purpose: What is the purpose of this piece? What issues, ideas, questions, etc., does it address? What is the author trying to accomplish?
      * Shared Assumptions: What does the artifact assume about its readers and their shared social/cultural assumptions (what they know and agree with)?
   4. In a second short paragraph, talk about its specific features.
      * How is it structured? How are text and visual elements put together? Where are the most important visual elements? Textual elements? How do you know those are the most important?
      * How are logos, pathos and/or ethos used to get the message across?
      * What is the tone? How can you tell the author’s feelings by the use of words, phrases, images, color, layout, or other clues?
3. **Individual RGA Report.** Divide this up into sections:
   1. ***Give it a title.*** Really. And not just “Wedding Invitations through the ages.” Create the title after you’ve finished writing the Report – you’ll have a better idea of what main idea you’ve taken away from it and what you want your audience to know initially.
   2. ***Introduction***: Briefly explain what the genre is. Include your initial feelings about doing this. For example, had you ever encountered this genre? When and/or where? Or not… What, if anything, did you already know about it. Were you worried about finding examples? Was there anything else you were thinking about or concerned about as you got started with the gathering part?
   3. ***Patterns and Their Meanings:*** This should be several paragraphs long.
      * What patterns do you see? What is common across all the examples? Get specific. Initially use three examples (that’s required), but you can also bring in as much of the Group Annotated Bibliography work as you want.
      * What do those patterns reveal about the situation in which the genre is used? What is assumed about its intended audience? Who does the genre include or exclude? What cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions are revealed?
      * When are the patterns broken? Are there differences over time? Between cultures?
   4. ***Final Thoughts.*** You’re done analyzing and describing and thinking. Now tell me what you *really* believe about this genre as it has been revealed to you, both by way of the three examples you were required to use and the others in the Group Annotated Bibliography that you mentioned. What does this genre say about its audience, about power relations, about status? About history? About why this genre is used when it’s used for the purpose(s) it’s used for (that was a terrible sentence!)? Draw a conclusion about the genre and how it is and has been used.
   5. ***Final Reflection.*** Okay, this is an add-on, but it’s your turn to vent about this Project. What thoughts do you have about looking at genre this way – what did this show you? Did it change your perceptions about genre? Do you think this could be a useful way to approach a writing task from now on?

**Project 3: The Multi-Genre Project**

Okay, enough of me telling you what to do. Now it’s time for you to dive into a topic of your own choice. It should be something that you’re willing to fight for, to make noise about, to rile people up about. What you won’t be doing is writing a single, linear research essay where you create an argumentative thesis and then convince people you’re right. Bo---rrriiinggg! It’s what you did in high school, right? Fun? Nope. Didn’t think so.

For this Project, you’ll work in a group to create a collection of pieces from different genres that look at a question, topic, or theme from different angles. It’s personal, contrary, and we’ll look at a couple of examples to show you what they look like and how they work. But think of it like this: if you’re really annoyed about women’s reproductive rights, you can get your ideas to different audiences by using different genres, maybe a song directed at high school students, maybe an op-ed piece for a news-based website, maybe a (short) graphic novel for women, maybe an interview with somebody who’s been affected by this issue.

In other words, I’m turning you loose with what you’ve learned about how genres work so you can use that knowledge to comment on a current issue that speaks to you personally. Yes, you’ll be in a group, and you’ll be doing some parts of the final Project together, but you don’t even have to agree about perspectives as long as the whole thing ties together in a way that makes a point… that serves a rhetorical purpose. And although this is meant to be more-or-less print based, you can present the final Project in whatever creative way you think works rhetorically.

**Schedule and due dates:**

***Mon 11/11 What’s a multi-genre project?***  We’ll look at and analyze a couple of MGP’s to get some ideas. We’ll also revisit the ideas of rhetorical situation and genre (just in case you forgot in a week!). Homework: come in with ideas about issues and potential genres to work with.

***Wed 11/13 Choosing issues, setting groups.*** A lot of brainstorming and setting up. Homework: Well, not really homework, but your new group must complete the Group Task materials by next week.

***Mon 11/18 Let the work begin!*** Spend the next two weeks creating your Project materials (see

***thru*** Guidelines below). ***First draft is due Mon 12/02.***

***W 11/27***

***Mon 12/2 Workshop First Drafts.*** You’ll create Reviewer’s Memos and swap Projects with another group to get some feedback. I’ll give you feedback on Wednesday.

***Wed 12/4 Workshop.*** Keep working on revising your MGP. Final Projects due next time!

***Mon 12/9 Present your Project.*** We’ll set up a way for everybody to look at all the Projects today. The Final Version must be uploaded to OpenLab EOD Wed 12/11.

**Guidelines**

The Final Project should include these things:

* **Title Page**
* **Table of Contents:**

Introductory Letter

Document 1: genre, author

Document 2: genre, author

Document 3: genre, author

Document 4: genre, author

Document 5: genre, author

Etc……

Reference List

* **Introductory Letter:** The rest of us in the class are your audience members, which means we may know next to nothing about your issue, or we may have strong opinions of our own. Keeping that in mind, your Introductory Letter should answer these questions –

1. What is your topic? Why is it important now? Why is it important to *your group* now?
2. What does the reader need to know before looking at your Project? That is, what is the historical/cultural context for this issue? You’ll need to do some basic research here to see what other people have been saying about the topic.
3. Each member must add a paragraph explaining what genre they chose, why they chose that one, and what they learned: what audience were you trying to reach? What were you trying to tell people or get them to feel/understand? What did you learn about writing in different genres as a way of inquiring into your topic and communicating what you know?
4. Anything else your group want to say before we dive into the Project?

* **The Multi-Genres:**

1. Each person must create *at least* one genre piece to include.
2. Think about how you arrange your group’s pieces. It should make a statement, tell a story, explore a theme, and leave us thinking and/or feeling about your issue in ways we haven’t before.

* **Reference List:** You’ll have sources you consulted to explain the context of the issue. You’ll probably also have looked at specific genres that address the issue, just to familiarize yourself with who has already said what. So even if you haven’t quoted or paraphrased a source, be sure to list it here so that we can see how far you wandered while you were looking for information or inspiration. Use MLA or APA style (consult the Purdue OWL for how to do that).